

OBETS. Revista de Ciencias Sociales

Vol. 11, n.º 1, 2016, pp. 311-330

ISSN: 1989-1385

DOI: 10.14198/OBETS2016.11.1.12

THE CONVERSATION ON POLITICAL ISSUES ON TWITTER: AN ANALYSIS OF THE PARTICIPATION AND FRAMES IN THE DEBATE ON THE 'WERT LAW' AND EVICTIONS IN SPAIN

**LA CONVERSACIÓN SOBRE TEMAS POLÍTICOS EN
TWITTER: UN ANÁLISIS DE LA PARTICIPACIÓN Y LOS
ENCUADRES INTERPRETATIVOS EN EL DEBATE SOBRE LA
'LEY WERT' Y LOS DESAHUCIOS EN ESPAÑA**

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to determine which social agents are involved in the political debate on Twitter and whether the interpretive hegemony of actors that have traditionally been the most prominent is tempered by the challenge of framing shared with audiences. The relationship between the interpretations expressed and the profiles of participants is analyzed in comparison with the frames used by mainstream media. The chosen methodology combines content analysis and discourse analysis techniques on a sample of 1,504 relevant tweets posted on two political issues –the approval of the education law LOMCE and

the evictions caused by the crisis, which have also been studied in the front pages of four leading newspapers in Spain. The results show a correlation between political issue singularities, frames and the type of discussion depending on the participants.

Keywords: debate; social networks; public opinion; frame; participatory democracy; citizenship; users; political communication.

Resumen

El objetivo de este estudio es conocer qué agentes sociales participan en el debate político en Twitter y si la hegemonía interpretativa de los actores que tradicionalmente han sido más prominentes se ve atenuada por el desafío de un *framing* compartido con las audiencias. Se analiza la relación entre las interpretaciones y los perfiles de los participantes en comparación con los frames de los medios tradicionales. La metodología combina técnicas de análisis de contenido y de análisis del discurso sobre una muestra de 1.504 tuits publicados a propósito de dos temas políticos –la aprobación de la LOMCE y los desahucios causados por la crisis–, que también han sido objeto de estudio en las portadas de cuatro periódicos generalistas. Los resultados muestran una correlación entre las singularidades temáticas, los frames y el tipo de debate según los participantes.

Palabras clave: debate; redes sociales; opinión pública; frame; democracia participativa; ciudadanía; usuarios; comunicación política.

1. INTRODUCTION

As a channel of citizen participation, Twitter generates a space of interaction where the interests of different social and political actors coalesce, and where a issue agenda of diverse settings are created. From a theoretical point of view, the tweets can be considered to be texts that are linked to the shaping of public opinion (Vreese, 2005), just like any other type of journalistic or political discourse that is made visible in public opinion settings.

This work tries to analyze the treatment that two public interest subjects in Spain have received on Twitter: the evictions caused by the economic crisis, and the Organic Law for the Improvement of Educational Quality (LOMCE in Spanish) –also known as the Wert Law–. We will define the actors that had a leading role in the debate, as well as the different frames that were used to present these phenomena. Both political themes brought about a heated debate in Spanish society.

The start of the financial crisis in 2008 exacerbated the social drama of the evictions in Spain. The increase in the number of evictions was more noticeable from this date on, as during this year, around 350,000 foreclosure-related evictions were executed. This increased the number of evictions 5-fold as compared to the start of the housing bubble (CGPJ, 2012). This situation reached

its maximum social relevance on November 2013, when various suicides of those desperately affected by the eviction took place.

The 'Wert law' was rejected by the different political parties and professional collectives, due to what was perceived as a deterioration of democratic liberties. On the one hand, the law was said to attack the secularism of Education, as it granted more power to the Church in the schools, and on the other hand, its central-government character was denounced, due to the limitations that it set, above all, to the linguistic competencies within the autonomous communities in Spain such as Catalonia.

Furthermore, this research work concludes with the analysis of the front pages of four of the most important general-interest newspapers in Spain (*El País*, *El Mundo*, *ABC* and *La Razón*), in order to contrast the data extracted from the review of the tweets and to establish when these issues garnered the most attention by the media, and through which frames was the information presented.

For performing this study, we analyzed the discourse within the context of the theory of framing. The method employed combines quantitative and qualitative techniques. The compilation of the corpus of tweets was done with Topsy, and for its inspection, we performed content analysis that was oriented towards the determination of the most commonly-used interpretative frames in the most influential public dialogue generated in Twitter and in the press on both political subjects. For this, a typology of the frames and profiles was established that would allow us to identify the different agents that participated in the public debates (politicians, media, journalists, opinion leaders, citizens...).

The sample studied was composed of 1,504 tweets. They consisted of the most disseminated messages in this social network during both periods of study analyzed, which coincided with the adoption of the Wert law and the increase in suicides due to the evictions. For the analysis of the newspaper's front pages, we employed the *PageOneX* tool, with was used to generate a visual snapshot of the front page's surface area dedicated to both themes, as well as the dominant frames used, to be able to compare it to the data from our analysis of the debate on Twitter.

The results show a correlation between the characteristics of the political subjects (subject uniqueness) and the type of debate generated, taking into account the profile of the participants, diversity of the frames employed and the intensity of the dialogue. Similarly, the comparison between the treatment that these issues received in the press and Twitter reveal that there is a match between the attention given to a news bite by the media and the level of dia-

logue generated, as media neglect seems to translate to the disappearance of the debate in the social networks on both of these public-interest subjects.

1.1. Twitter and participation in the political debates

With a user base close to two billion, Twitter has become, in the last few years, an important microblogging social network in the political life of many countries. Its significant effect on the discourse of public matters has been aided by two structural characteristics: the “public by default” nature of its messages, and the adoption of the hashtag as the backbone of the conversations (Rossi and Magnani, 2012).

The quantitative studies on Twitter have determined that more than 85% of the content in this social network are newspaper headlines or are related to current events (Kwak et al., 2010). Therefore, even though the use of this social network as a main source of information of the population is anecdotal, around 8% in the US, according to data from the Pew Center (Holcomb et al., 2013), its perception as a source of first-class information invites news professionals to its constant motoring that could feed back into their own work.

As a continuation of the intellectual tradition of movements such as civic journalism, the journalistic institutions are revitalizing the democratic role of the citizen through the creation and the updating of participative formulas that invite their participation in public life. This affects every stage of the information production processes where they intervene in: the observation and the discovery of sources, the selection and the filtering of the subject matter-gatekeeping; the creation and publishing of the journalistic pieces and, as expected, their distribution and interpretation by part of the public (Hermida, 2011). This study addresses the participation of the public in the selection phase and media coverage of different subjects and their posterior interpretation.

Twitter is an external space to traditional communication media, where media participation processes crystalize, considered here to be a legitimizing mechanism of democracy (Bucy and Gregson, 2001) that encourages civil commitment and the empowerment of the citizens (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2012). As a microblogging service, Twitter not only becomes an efficient form of spreading political information, but of interpretation of political subjects as well, and the subsequent expression of opinions that can be used to reinforce a position on a subject (Stieglitz and Dang-Xuan, 2012).

Gatekeeping and the creation of the issue agenda is one of the elements of professional culture that is most affected. The agenda generated by the Twitter user is collectively constructed through the aggregation of tweets, meaning, it goes unnoticed by the mass audiences until its re-iteration makes it visible

(in the form of a trending topic) or until journalism professionals exercise qualitative 'remediation' starting with the bulk of the messages –selecting and 'curating' tweets–, always under the belief that this construct will constitute a certain representation of the public as a whole (Bruns et al., 2011; Verdegem and Paulussen, 2013).

Research on the morphology of the conversations surrounding political subjects in Twitter finds itself in an early developmental stage. The greater part of the previous literature on the nature of these debates has tended to map the participants as if talking about structural nodes –starting with diffusion paradigms, the way information is propagated in this network is studied (Bruns et al., 2011)–, leading to the sociological profiles of the participants in the political talks receiving scant attention, and almost always catering to the classification of users in relation to their publishing activities.

Our research interest is rooted in knowing what social agents struggle for the control of the attributes around an issue in Twitter, and if the interpretative hegemony of the actors who have traditionally been more prominent is attenuated by the challenge of this new, distributed framing (Meraz and Papacharissi, 2013).

As a derivation from these research questions, we think it is imperative to know what correlation exists between the interpretations of a political matter that the "producers" (Bruns, 2008) of this network make, and the interpretations proposed by mainstream media.

Even though communication media and journalists are still the main protagonists in Twitter (Cha et al., 2010), institutionalized politics has adopted this channel to avoid journalistic mediation and to influence the citizens by framing and highlighting different attributes of the political issues (Hemphill et al., 2013).

Opinion leaders and intellectuals benefit from a privileged status, thanks to the visibility of their tweets; an influence that is granted by an equation that marries popularity –followers–, valuable content –retweets– and reputation –mentions– (Cha et al., 2010). Ordinary citizens, in turn, have found an ideal channel for the organization and expression of their views in endless political contexts among which elections, legislative reforms, protests and revolutions abound.

The theory of framing offers a favorable framework for explaining how a social phenomenon, elevated to political subject, is socially constructed in a new media ecosystem, where the traditional definers of social reality share their protagonism with other social actors.

1.2. Frames in the forming processes of public opinion on political matters

The value of framing theory is based on its capacity for generating recognizable interpretative schemes from discourses. As a revealer of complex thought processes, the frame is very useful as an instrument of analysis of interactive processes through which political and social actors contribute to give meaning to the events, occurrences, social phenomena or political actions (Entman, 2007; Weaver, 2007; Kinder 2007).

Understanding the frame as an interactive process of social articulation through a shared discourse in specific contexts allows the addressing of subjects that are of public interest from two facets: as an expression of interpretative schemes and as a symbolic construction process, where the type of participation plays a fundamental role in the individual cognitive effects (Gamson and Modigliani, 1989; Gamson et al., 1992). From this perspective, this type of study using frames can contribute to the pondering on the influence of the new processes of production and consumption of information on current affairs; about the effects of the social networks on the quality of public debate, and about the transformation that the new arenas for deliberation introduce in the political and media spheres.

This study transcends the definition of the frames as schemes that are imposed from the media discourse to understand framing as an open and interactive process that contributes to the creation of public opinion (D'Angelo, 2002; Sádaba, Rodríguez-Virgili and Bartolomé, 2012).

For the analysis of the conversation frames in Twitter, two cases in Spain were chosen. These cases meet the characteristics that define a political issue: conflict, political importance, opportunity, citizen interest and discussion having various interpretations (Borrat, 1989; Santillán, 2012). Without becoming atypical as in the case of the denominated 'political crises', the political issue shares with them the increasing interest by the public. Its symbolic and social definition results from the comparison of the media constructs with those coming from the individuals and groups that make up the audience (Casero, 2009).

In agreement with this theoretical focus, both the eviction cases provoked by the crisis, and the educational reform advocated by the minister José Ignacio Wert were two controversial issues that had their origin in the political system, re-defining the media stage and other social spaces, with the intervention of different actors in an interactive dynamism. However, the differences among them give rise to certain nuances that have been taken into account in the analysis. As for their development, the 'Wert law' is a specific issue that

could be considered finished or static, while the evictions case is a phenomenon in constant evolution and change. These unique themes have conditioned the type of debate generated around them, and subsequently, the frames used. The ability of an issue to develop with new information and to originate 'headline news' during this process, that work as the driving force for the deployment of underlying ideas in the discourses (Bennett and Lawrence, 1995; Canel and Sanders, 2005), is another factor that also affects the analysis of frames.

In any case, these two topics generated very active social participation, not only from politicians and journalists, but also from intellectuals, civil groups and the common people themselves. These topics, then, have become an object of study, whose analysis could provide crucial knowledge on the quality of public debate, the characteristics of the new scenarios of discussion, and on the type of participants that acquire protagonism in them. In both cases, the participants, the type of frames and the informative characteristics of the issues are three interrelated factors.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The analysis on the participants that intervened in the public debate that was raised by the 'Wert law' and by the evictions in Twitter, as well as the analysis on the nature of the opinions given by the different social agents that debated these issues on this social network were performed using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

We used content analysis to understand the author's profiles, the frames used, and their amplification. Through the use of the Topsy tool, we retrieved, in full, the tweets that were related to both issues at the moment in time that these tweets piqued the public interest. Therefore, in the case of the evictions, we investigated the interventions in Twitter on November 2012, a date that coincides with a considerable increase on the number of tweets related to the evictions. This is due to the precipitation of important events –suicides of affected citizens, Government and City Hall measures, judicial resolutions, etc. (Autor, 2013). As for the case of educational reform, we studied the messages generated in Twitter after the passing of the law by the Council of Ministers (17 May-17 June 2013).

To define the samples analyzed, we opted for selecting the more "relevant" tweets, understanding them to be those that reached an amplification of 20 or more retweets. The final sample was composed of 1,022 tweets on the eviction debate, and 482 tweets on the 'Wert law', as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Sample design starting from retrieved tweets on two issues during the proposed analysis periods. Source: Topsy

POLITICAL ISSUE	ANALYSIS PERIOD	COLLECTED TWEETS	SUBTOTALS	ANALYZED SAMPLE (% OVER COLLECTED)
EVICCTIONS	1 November 2012 - 30 November 2012	408,877	“desahucios” (310,401) “desahucio” (98,476)	1022 (0,25%)
‘WERT LAW’	17 May 2013 - 17 June 2013	173,954	“LOMCE” (93,639) “ley Wert” (41,047) “reforma educativa” (36,012) “leywert” (3087)	482 (0,27%)

Once the sample of tweets was compiled, an analysis using qualitative strategies was performed. This analysis helped us to determine the most relevant authors. The unit of analysis was a tweet, and, for the encoding of the data, their textual content, the author's name, the publication date and the amplification of the message (number of retweets) was analyzed. Also, the different author profiles were determined, using in great measures, the classification used in previous research studies (Pérez Díaz, Berná y Arroyas, 2013); 1) Media, media spaces and journalists; 2) Political parties and political representatives; 3) Individual citizens; 4) Experts and opinion leaders (>10,000 followers) and 5) Civil society and groups that were involved in the political issue. To determine the different profiles, we took into consideration the user's bio and the verification badges, and to define the opinion leaders, the number of followers in each account.

For the analysis of tweets under the theory of framing, as applied to communication studies, we followed the typology proposed by Neuman, Just and Crigler (1992), and used by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000). Within it, we find the frames of human interest, conflict, morality, social and economic consequences, and of responsibility. A frame on contextual information has been added to group the tweets that transmit information with a minimum level of interpretation:

- a) **Conflict frame:** in a general sense, it refers to the interpretation of issues or events, such as conflict among individuals, groups, institutions or nations.
- b) **Consequence frame:** labels the texts that refer to the social consequences that an issue has for a particular individual, group, region or country.

- c) **Human interest frame:** this frame interprets those subjects, problems or events from an emotional angle, highlighting the individual aspects, disconnected from their social contexts or political ramifications.
- d) **Morality frame:** the expressions that lead to reactions based on moral and ethical values or religious beliefs that lead to the approval of dismissal of a political initiative are gathered here.
- e) **Attribution of responsibility frame:** this frame encompasses all the settings that attribute the cause of the problems to governments, institutions, parties or individuals. These are frames that point to someone as the guilty party.
- f) **Contextual, informative or neutral frame:** this frame focuses on statements that adopt a neutral posture against the information that they transmit, not leaning towards any of the conflicting interpretations. As Entman (1993) pointed out, these can be phrases that do not comply with any of the four functions of the frame: define, diagnose, judge or suggest remedies. This category can be thought of as 'absence of a frame';

After the first encoding, part of the sample was re-classified, following the method by Holsti (1969), to verify the reliability of the analysis. The 138 instances obtained were 0.92 reliable (R), above acceptable levels (0.9). The data were processed in an SPSS 21 matrix for their statistical analysis.

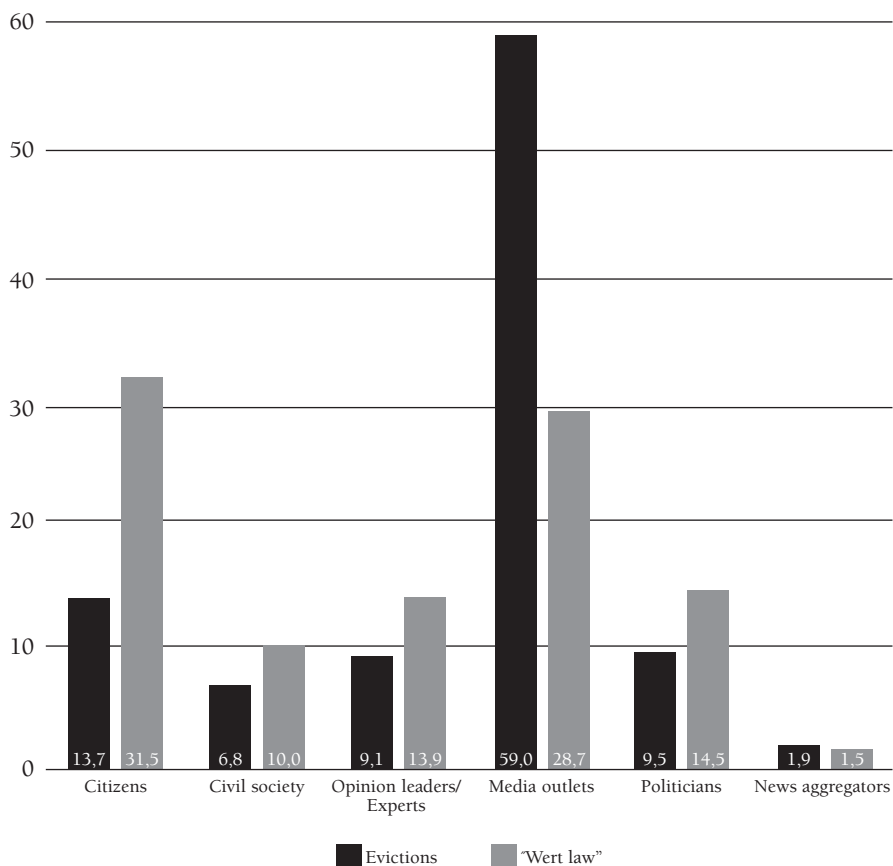
Using the same frame categories from the Twitter analysis, we analyzed the front pages of 4 of the main general-interest newspapers in Spain (*El País*, *El Mundo*, *ABC* and *La Razón*), to determine when in time the peak of media attention was reached, as well as the frames used when covering an issue. The PageOneX tool was used to create a snapshot of the surface area used by these newspapers on both issues, to compare them to the data from our analysis of the debate on Twitter.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Frequency of profiles

From the total published tweets relevant to both political issues in Twitter, the media and its professionals played the main role in the interpretation of the evictions (59%), and to a lesser extent, to the debate on the 'Wert law' (28.7%). Figure 1 shows that this last issue, however, generated more tweets from the citizens (31.5%) than the eviction issue, where the publications by private citizens did not reach such an important level (13.7). The citizens that were organized in sectorial collectives, social movements and other civil society

Figure 1. Frequency of the participant's profiles on the eviction and educational reform Twitter debates.



groups captured around 10% of the important published messages related to evictions from homes, while the education law only provoked around 6.8% of the publications by this category of authors.

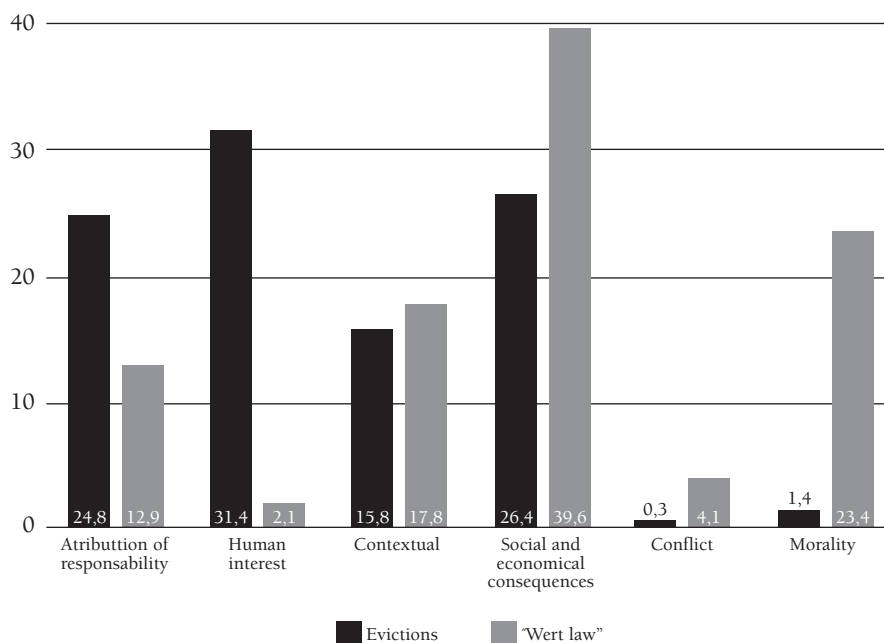
In both issues, the level of participation by opinion and political leaders was similar, while that of the aggregators was insignificant. We should highlight that the protagonism of the media and the citizen's discourse varied proportionally: the presence and number of relevant tweets on the 'Wert law' coming from media groups decreased (-48.64%) just as the tweets on the evictions coming from the citizens –the aggregate of private citizens, organized civil groups and opinion leaders– increased to about the same number (+53%).

3.2. Frequency of frames

The sample gathered shows that in the eviction debates, the major frame used was that of human interest (31.4%), a fact that contrasts with the scarce and practically non-existent presence of this interpretative setting in the case of the LOMCE (2.1%). Other important frames in the discussion generated on Twitter on the evictions were the social consequences (26.4%) and the attribution of responsibilities (24.8%), as shown in Figure 2. These two interpretations had, however, an unequal relevance within the discussion on the 'Wert law'. Therefore, while the "social consequences" focus was the largest in the interventions spurred by the LOMCE (39.6%), the presence of the corpus of messages whose essential goal was to attribute responsibility was more dilute (12.9%).

Furthermore, the comparison of both case studies reveals an important feature when referring to the way each issue was framed: the morality frame was widely represented in the tweets on the Wert law –in fact, it constituted the second most frequently-used frame–, even if it discreetly appeared on the eviction debate (1.4%). The conflict frame, on the other hand, was barely represented on the debates generated in Twitter on the issues analyzed, with fre-

Figure 2. Frequencies of the type of frame used on the eviction and educational reform Twitter debates



quencies of 0.3% and 4.1% respectively. As was already discussed, one of the characteristics of a political subject is its conflictive character. Even if it appears contradictory, the scarce use of this frame should not come as a surprise. Even if 'conflict' is a feature of both political subjects, the frames refer to how the interpretations explain the conflict itself.

3.3. Frequency of profiles by frame and frames by profiles

The data reveal that the voices of the eviction and LOMCE debates found in Twitter were significantly linked to pre-determined interpretative frames. As for the evictions and focusing on the frames by profiles, it should be pointed out that there was a degree of agreement between some of the participants of the debate. Civil society, the citizens and the opinion leaders focused the eviction discussion preferably within the frames of attribution of responsibility and human interest, with frequency indexes ranging from 28.3% to 50%, respectively.

The politicians and media, however, did not follow the same pattern as the rest of the debate participants. Thus, the media concentrated their efforts in highlighting the social consequences (32.7%) and in showing the human interest (30.8) of the issue. The politicians, for their part, mainly focused that phenomenon on the attribution of responsibility (32%) and consequences (44.3%) frames.

On the other hand, if we take into account the entire sample set, we can observe that the attribution of responsibility frames were especially linked to the citizen profile (41.5%) and media (20.2%). The human interest frame had a special connection with the media (57.9%), and the citizens (14.3%). On their part, the context and consequences frames seemed to be exclusive to the media profile, with indexes of 70.2% and 73% of the total tweets analyzed, respectively, even if the politicians also compiled a significant percentage of tweets using the last frame mentioned (15.9%). Lastly, the conflict frames were almost exclusively associated with civil society (33%) and citizens (66.7%), and the morality frames with opinion leaders (42.9%) and citizens (35.7%).

In the case of the LOMCE debate, the data show that the media mainly activated consequence frames (31.2%), context (39.9%), and morality (13%). The politicians framed the issue from the perspective of its consequences (54.3%) or from its moral evaluation (25.7%). The citizens, the opinion leaders and civil society, on the other hand, again showed certain parallelisms in the interpretation of the law, and framed their main interventions from the attribution of responsibility, morality and consequences frames. Within the profiles of citizens and opinion leaders, most of the messages were constructed from the consequences frames (38.2% and 47.8%, respectively), although the morality (27.6% and 25.4%) and attribution of responsibility (19.1% and 14.9%)

frames were frequently used. The civil society messages were oriented towards the morality and consequence frames (37.5% in both cases).

On the other hand, when taking into account the entire sample of tweets, we can establish that the attribution of responsibility frame and the human interest frames were mainly associated with the citizen profile (46.8% and 60%, respectively). In the sample, the politicians and opinion leaders never used the human interest frame. At the same time, it is important to point out that the conflicting interpretation of the law was almost exclusively activated by the media (40%), politicians (25%) and citizens (25%). The morality frame, by itself, was the one having the most diverse profiles. Thus, although the citizen profile contributed the most messages within this frame (37.5%), the rest of the participants also used moral evaluations of the 'Wert law' when expressing their opinions, with values around 15%. As for the consequences frame, we can highlight that the media profile, politicians, citizens and opinion leaders were the ones who preferably focused their messages from this interpretative perspective, with frequency indexes of 22.5%, 19.9%, 30.4%, 16.8%, respectively. In last place, it should be highlighted that the context frame was almost exclusively linked to the media profile (64%).

3.4. Press coverage and its influence on the framing of the debates on Twitter

When the data were examined, we saw that the moment of the greatest volume of participation –from the 6th to the 20th of November, 2012 and from the 17th to the 24th of May, 2013– (see Figures 3 and 5) coincided with the days when the press dedicated more newspaper space to the issue. As for the frames used, the debate was affected when media coverage focused on the issues and the number of reports was greater. The rhythm of information in the case of the evictions was dynamic (see Figure 4), and plagued with 'headline news', that increased participation, with news such as the suicides that took place on the 9th, 15th and 28th of November, 2012. Media coverage of the event on the 9th of November, 2012 was presented in human terms, which coincided with the posterior rebound of this type of frame in the debate on Twitter (11th of November, 2012). The same thing happened with the coverage of the suicide

Figure 3. Evolution of the volume of tweets surrounding the issue of evictions during the period of time investigated. Source: Topsy

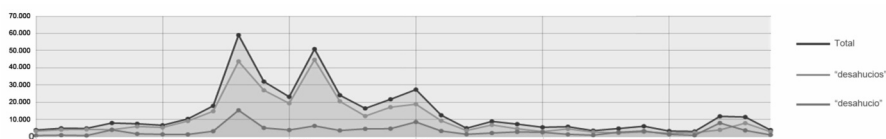
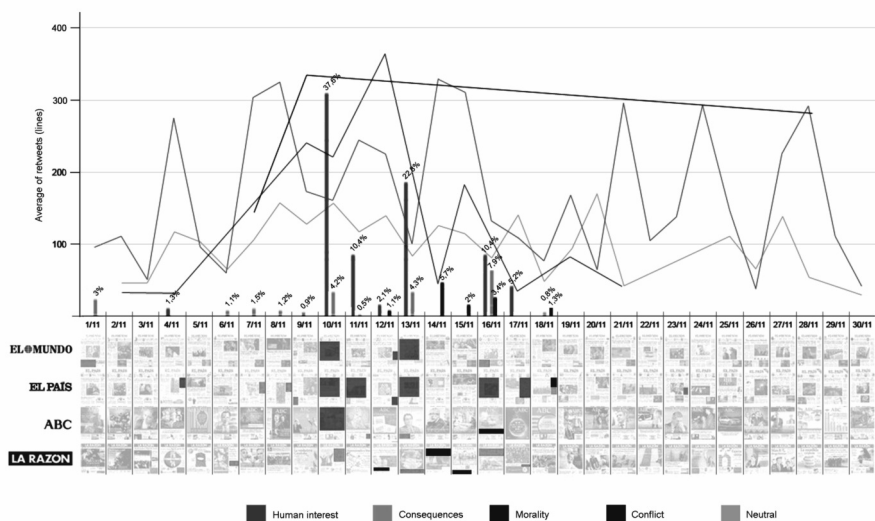


Figure 4. Evolution of the frames used on the eviction as employed by the press (area expressed as bars and daily percentages) and the frames employed in Twitter (expressed with lines that represent the average of tweets reached). Source: author generated with PageOneX.



on the 15th of November, 2012, which was more focused on the consequences. When the media did not report it as front page news, (as it happened to the suicide on the 28th November, omitted from coverage on the 29th), the interpretations on Twitter waned.

By itself, the 'Wert law' as an issue presented a more static news pattern (see Figure 5), where we see a similar behavior: the law is approved on the 17th of May, 2013, and is reported on by the media on the 18th through the consequence and morality frames, causing a slight increase on the re-diffusion of these frames in the posterior conversation in Twitter, as shown in Figure 6). When the press stops highlighting the issue, the debate vanishes.

Figure 5. Evolution of the volume of tweets surrounding the educational reform issue during the period of study. Source: Topsy.

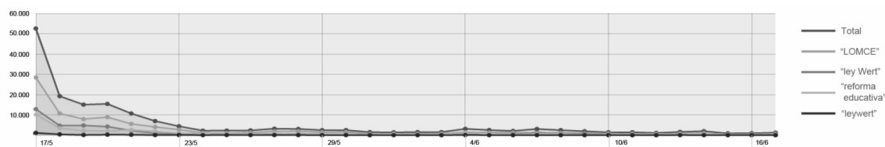
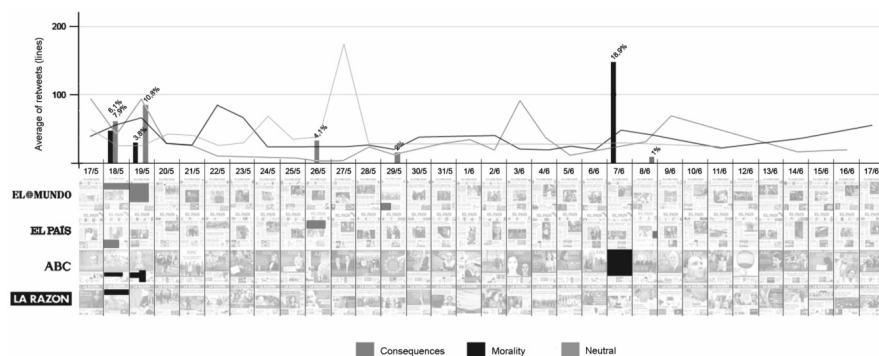


Figure 6. Evolution of the frames on the education reform employed by the press (area expressed as bars and daily percentages) and the frames employed in Twitter (expressed with lines that represent the average of tweets reached). Source: author generated with PageOneX



4. CONCLUSIONS

The discourse on Twitter on the 'Wert law' and on the evictions is polyphonic and multivocal from the interpretative point of view, but certain regularities can be observed that make clear how the singularities of each political issue condition the choice of frames used and the participative dynamic itself.

1. Interpretative differences according the participant's profiles. When cross-checking the data between the issues, we observed some interpretative predilections by part of the different agents that participated on the discussion. The media especially linked themselves to the consequence and contextual frames, even though the human interest focus was frequently used in the case of the evictions. The political class, in turn, was noticeably inclined to explain the issues by using the consequences frame. The rest of the actors –civil society, citizens and opinion leaders– used the social network to question and identify guilty parties (attribution of responsibility) or to show support/reject (morality) and express solidarity (human interest). Also, the data used in the analysis of both cases revealed a certain evidence of Twitter's tendency to polarize the debates of the two great antagonistic groups: media and politicians on one side and civil society and citizens on the other, an observation that backs the theories that point to the social network, due to its connections to civil society, as an enriching field of the political-media debates.

2. The debate on Twitter develops at par with the media attention given to the issue. There is a direct relationship between the volume of public information and the volume of conversation on Twitter. As a political issue with a

static character, the 'Wert law' generated less conversation than the eviction phenomena. The conversation on the LOMCE was more focused on the day the law was passed, when the news jumped to the front pages of the newspapers. In the moment the subject disappears from the front pages of the newspapers, the conversation in Twitter vanishes. This corroborates the fact that the degree of attention the media gives to a news bite corresponds to the level of conversation generated. In the case of the evictions, the peak of the conversation in Twitter coincides with the days when the newspapers dedicated more front page surface area to this issue.

3. The specific subject matter conditions the choice of frames. The differences in both subjects explain much of the divergence among the frames employed: the dramatic and emotional character of the eviction phenomenon determines that the human interest frame be predominant, while with the 'Wert law', an issue that has a more conceptual character, everything revolves around the rational speculation on the causes and the consequences of the educational reform. Nevertheless, the development of the information on both subjects possesses different patterns: while the eviction case generated frequent new information, of dramatic character, and with a strong narrative component (suicides, protests...), the 'Wert law', due to its static character, was updated to a lesser degree by the media, which did not give rise to new reports that could open the interpretative spectrum. Due to these reasons, the predominant frames used were different. Most of the participants of the debate evaluated the eviction phenomenon from the same frames. The coincidence that the data show when framing the eviction phenomenon is explained, in part, by the specific subject matter of the evictions that, as already pointed out, possessed a dramatic character, and therefore, was markedly emotional. There isn't much interpretative unanimity in the case of the 'Wert law'. In this issue, a greater diversification of the frames assigned to the different profiles is observed.

4. The specific subject matter conditions the diversity of participation on the debate. The informative characteristics of the subject of the debate also define the participant's profiles. The greater the development of information on the subject, the greater protagonism is acquired by the media on the debate in Twitter, mitigating the voices of the citizens. The data on the present study confirm that the media have a privileged position in the discussion of the political issues in this social network. This is more obvious when the issue in question generated new information, as it happened on the eviction cases, where we see that some 'icon news' intensify the attention given by the media, who in turn see their visibility doubled on Twitter. This new information catalyzes the discussion, at the same time that the media, as news producers, increase

their protagonism. This means that a greater news-worthiness of a subject increases the protagonism of the media in the general discussion, leading to the loss of visibility of the citizen's participation, which can be interpreted as a loss of diversity. The comparison between both cases shows that the visibility of the citizens and civil society is attenuated to the same degree as the weight of the information by the media increase.

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Recibido: 26/3/15

Aceptado: 11/02/16